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ABSTRACT

The insight and understanding gained from various discourse models can allow teachers of reading and writing to focus on the many ways reading and writing instruction can be integrated. For example, syntactically oriented writing exercises such as sentence combining and Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of a sentence can assist students in the effective writing of sentences and paragraphs, and can be applied to the reading process so that students can become analytical readers of complex sentences and paragraphs. Christensen's rhetoric of sentences and paragraphs allows student-writers the possibility of learning to see and create relationships within and between sentences. Sentence combining, on the other hand, allows students to manipulate sentence structures in order to compose more syntactically mature sentences. One useful approach to analyzing complex sentences is to have students practice sentence-combining in reverse; the breaking down of sentences into parts. Another approach is to teach students to understand how Christensen's free modifiers function and how they may function on various levels of a sentence, depending on their structural functions. (HOD)

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Techniques for Integrating Reading and Writing Instruction
in Secondary and Post-Secondary Reading Programs

For little more than the first half of this century, reading and writing instruction was isolated. Since then, language teachers have been constantly in search of instructional approaches that enhance the connections between reading and writing skills. The instructional strategies that are being utilized in integrating reading and writing instruction are many. However, with the vast body of available research that educators have just begun to tap, the potential of this research for assisting teachers in incorporating within their classrooms an even greater number of strategies has been far from explored. My purpose is to examine and discuss several instructional techniques for integrating reading and writing instruction in secondary and post-secondary reading programs. However, a discussion of some writing skills approaches that can possibly lead to improved reading comprehension must be viewed in the context of the evolution of the reunification of reading and writing instruction. Therefore, the major focus of my paper will be preceded by a discussion of those historical factors that led to the isolation and then integration of reading and writing instruction.

Evolutionary Forces

At the turn of the century the teaching of reading became an isolated area of instruction, no longer taught in concert with writing instruction. The concern in education with the measurement of discrete skills prompted the development of reading methods that could readily attend to isolated skills, and hence, skills that could easily be measured. It was during the first half of of this century and shortly beyond that traditional reading instruction emphasized

(1) instruction in recognition of words and sentences, (2) approaches for the eradication of readers' responses that were viewed as errors, and (3) the use of readability formulas that relied on "superficial standards of length and complexity of words or sentences" (Beaugrande, 1980, p. 283).

Not until the late 1950's and the decade of the 60's did the teaching of reading and writing, in addition to speaking and listening, begin to be seen as areas of similar concerns. The work of modern linguists and subsequently, the influences of the language experience approach, an outgrowth of the Dartmouth Project of 1966, led to attempts for combining the teaching of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Especially in the areas of reading and writing, linguists such as Leonard Bloomfield, Clarence Barnhart (1961), and Charles C. Fries (1963) drew upon the work of structural linguistics in providing varied approaches to reading and writing instruction. It was during this era that language arts' researchers and teachers began to view the connections between reading and writing instruction.

Even though applied linguistics was influential in promoting the initial shift towards integrating the teaching of reading and writing, the occurrence of modern linguistic methodology being extended to the study of texts, discourse, provided the needed impetus in focusing on the relatedness of reading and writing. During the 1960's various linguists proposed that discourse should be the major object of linguistic study. These proposals, in turn, were met by the extension of sentence studies to texts, which meant that texts were seen as sequence of sentences (Beaugrande, 1980). Primarily, of the text linguistic research to emerge in the 60's, it was either couched within the framework of existing theories of language or was the mere revision of those theories.

The 1970's ushered in a period of new research in theories of language which essentially was critical of sentence grammars being the foundation of any language theories. Scholars of various fields made various contributions to the development of text linguistics. Sociologists opposed the context-free abstractions of past methodology; computer scientists became involved in simulating human language processes; psychologists engaged in studies of human memory. Hence, interdisciplinarian approaches to the study of language have greatly impacted the development of various theories and models of discourse (Beaugrande, 1980).

In essence, insight and understanding gained from varied discourse models have provided a more comprehensive and encompassing view of language. Moreover, researchers and teachers of reading and writing are, at last, able to turn their attention to the many ways in which reading and writing instruction can be integrated.

Discourse Models and Reading-Writing Instruction

Briefly, researchers of discourse processing models, specifically process models of reading or comprehension, have been able to theorize on what one does with information after it is received (Beaugrande, 1981). Before such models, very little information was available on how information is processed, that is, understood, comprehended. One particular model that has the potential of impacting the field of language instruction considerably is the van Dijk and Kintsch model of strategic discourse comprehension (1983). Van Dijk and Kintsch in their model, an extension and refinement of more than a decade of study of discourse comprehension, propose that the notion of discourse understanding is strategic. They identify a set of discourse strategies that people use in forming the multilevel representations that

are involved in discourse comprehension and memory. What is most crucial to the model is the fact that comprehension is primarily dependent on an individual's knowledge base (one's prior knowledge of content and the many elements of language), the situational context of the text, and the strategies that one uses to process text. Of the model's various strategic processes, one of special interest to researchers of language production is the component of production strategies. The incorporation of the strategic aspects of production is consistent with the van Dijk and Kintsch general assumption that understanding is a constructive process (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983).

The Reader's Knowledge of Syntax

The foregoing and brief overview highlights how various historical factors have begun to influence our thinking on reading and writing instruction. I will now focus on just one very specific aspect of our cumulative knowledge about language, specifically discourse, and indicate several instructional strategies that may further enhance the integration of reading and writing instruction.

Within the van Dijk and Kintsch model and other discourse processing models (Beaugrande, 1981), the prior knowledge that a reader brings to a text is viewed as the reader's world knowledge. One relevant facet of this world knowledge is the comprehender's knowledge and understanding of syntactical structures. One's knowledge of syntax is just one basic component upon which the semantics of a piece of discourse is dependent. In other words, in order to understand the abstract relations between sentences or propositions, that is, a reader's ability to understand how discourse is (or is not) coherent, the syntactic features of discourse are just one means to expressing meaning (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983).

Sandra Stotsky (1975) in her extensive review of varied research studies that attempt to demonstrate the interrelationships between reading, writing, and language development suggests the possible value of syntactically-oriented writing exercises for improving reading comprehension. I propose that such syntactically-oriented writing exercises as sentence combining and Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of a sentence (1) can assist students in the effective writing of sentences and paragraphs, and (2) can be applied to the reading process so that students can become analytical readers of complex sentences and paragraphs.

The choice of utilizing sentence combining and Christensen's generative rhetoric of a sentence as tools for helping students analyze complex syntactical structures is based, in part, on the fact that both, as pedagogical approaches, offer systematic procedures in analyzing the structural components of sentences, and in the case of Christensen's rhetoric, paragraphs as well. Also, many composition classes make use of either one of these instructional strategies (especially sentence combining) as aids for improving student-writers' styles. However, all too often, teachers have failed to provide for students instructional approaches that would clearly focus on how students could apply their knowledge of producing complex sentences to comprehending those complex sentences that they must be able to read.

Specifically, sentence combining, an outgrowth of work in transformational grammar, is a process whereby students learn to manipulate sentence structures in order to compose more syntactically mature sentences. In fact, it is seen as a device for structuring the process of composing a sentence. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the student who understands how to compose a highly complex sentence also understands the sentence.

Francis Christensen's generative rhetoric of the sentence (1967) is based on his notion that most written composition on both the sentence

and paragraph levels is cumulative. Or put in another way, the composing process is cumulative in that it consists of modifiers or supporting details that are added to the main idea of a sentence or paragraph so that the main idea may be further advanced. The Christensen method is based on four basic processes or principles underlying the act of composing on both the sentence, paragraph, and full essay levels -- these principles being that of addition, direction of modification or movement, levels of generality or abstraction, and texture.

The major point to be understood by the Christensen rhetoric of sentences and paragraphs is that there are layers or levels of sentence and paragraph structures -- and in the final analysis, the entire essay or composition. His method allows student-writers the possibility of learning to see and create relationships within and between sentences. In fact, Christensen speculates that "the failure to see the relation of each upcoming sentence /in a paragraph/ to what has gone before is probably one source of the difficulty many people have in reading" (Christensen, 1967, p. 21).

The following selected textual passage represents a common example of complex syntactical structures that students often encounter in their reading:

> *On one hand, the masses of the people in this country are preparing to take a much more active part than formerly in controlling its destinies; on the other hand, the aristocracy, using this word in the widest sense, to include not only the nobility, but also those reinforcements from the classes bordering upon itself, which this class constantly attracts and assimilates, while it is threatened with losing its hold on the rudder of government, its power to give to public affairs its own bias and direction, is losing also that influence on the spirit and character of the people which it long exercised.* 1 3 5 7 9

This sentence, taken from a passage from the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Form A, 1960), is one that would obviously cause tremendous difficulties for students. (See Appendix for the entire passage.) As the first sentence of

a four-sentence paragraph, needless to say, inefficient readers are immediately lost once they begin moving into lines 3 and 4 (if they aren't lost already[1]). In providing students with strategies for handling sentences of this type, students should practice constructing, either as review or new material, a number of sentences that focus on similar structures as found in this sentence. Obviously, the major task of an instructor is to guide students in recognizing (1) that "the aristocracy" (line 3) is in want of some action, and (2) that before the action is located, there are a number of intervening structures whose functions must be understood.

My discussion of how sentence combining can be used in understanding the syntax of this sentence will be limited to some of the features of the intervening structures. However, instruction will obviously be incomplete if students are not made to recognize: (1) the contrasting functions of "on one hand" (line 1) and "on the other hand" (line 3); (2) the comparative structure that is found in line 2; (3) how "but" (line 4) functions in providing a broader definition of "the aristocracy"; and (4) the referential function of such words as "it," "its," and "this."

From line 3, "using this word in the widest sense" can be comprehended by students if they have practiced sentence combining creating participles as modifiers:[2]

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[1]One of the major problems with a test item such as this, and others so often found on standardized tests, is that students are forced to read passages that are completely out of context. If a student's prior knowledge of the content is either lacking or inaccessible, he is lost throughout the reading of the passage, even if he can manage segments of the syntax.

[2]Examples of sentence-combining exercises are taken from Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg, 1979.

1. The new storm swept from North Dakota through Ohio.
2. It sent temperatures plummeting.
3. It piled drifts high across roads.

↓

The new storm swept from North Dakota through Ohio, sending temperatures plummeting and piling drifts high across roads.

To make clear the adverbial infinitive, "to include not only the nobility" (line 4), the following type of sentence combining can be practiced:

1. The Shah wanted to be on the safe side.
2. The Shah brought along 200 body guards.

↓

The Shah, to be on the safe side, brought along 200 body guards.

And, in order that students understand that "which this class constantly attracts and assimilates" (lines 5 and 6) is modifying "those reinforcements from the classes bordering upon itself" (lines 4 and 5), students need practice with creating relative clauses of the following type:

1. A gust of wind suddenly broke the eerie silence.
2. The gust of wind began as a faint sigh.

A gust of wind, which began as a faint sigh, suddenly broke the eerie silence.

Finally, students need to understand two basic functions of the subordinate clause "while it is threatened with losing its hold on the rudder of government, its power to give to public affairs its own bias and direction" (lines 6-8): (1) that it represents a supplementary and subordinate statement to the other roles of "the aristocracy;" and (2) that within its structure there are two parallel structures completing the idea of what the aristocracy "is threatened with losing." Hence, sentence combining focusing on subordinate clauses and coordination should be practiced.

To further emphasize how sentence combining can be a useful approach

to analyzing complex sentences, a simple exercise by Paul McKee (1948) is recommended. What McKee suggests, in essence, is that students practice sentence-combining in reverse: the breaking down of sentences into parts. Of course, students' familiarization with sentence combining makes such an exercise even more effective.

First, here is the complex sentence:

> The Peddler, most often a Yankee, a New Englander, fitted himself out with a horse and wagon, covered to protect his goods and large enough to sleep in, and with boxes of supplies, such as pots and pans, pins and needles, scissors and buttons, hats, shoes, and clothes, and drove from farm to farm for hundreds of miles stopping at every farmhouse to tell what news he had picked up and to sell his wares to the housewife who seldom saw such things at the store.

Then it is broken down into nine simple sentences.

1. The peddler was a Yankee from New England.
2. He fitted himself out with a horse and wagon.
3. The wagon was covered to protect his goods.
4. The wagon was large enough to sleep in.
5. The peddler fitted himself out with boxes of supplies.
6. The supplies were pots, pans, pins, needles, scissors, buttons, hats, shoes, and clothes.
7. The peddler drove from farm to farm for hundreds of miles.
8. He stopped at every farmhouse to tell news he had picked up and to sell his wares to the housewife.
9. She seldom saw such things at the store.

The next textual passage, a complex sentence that has been lifted from a Time (February 28, 1983, p. 52) article on the British royal family, is representative of the type of sentence that can be clearly understood through practice in using Christensen's generative rhetoric of the sentence. The example sentence is from a paragraph about Prince Charles.

> Charles is an outdoorsman, and the farm stay was thoroughly in character, but it is also true that his week evoked the kind of symbolism that maintains the necessary royal illusion: that his family speaks for Britain, though not about government or anything else controversial; that they are mysterious and unapproachable, though much like me and thee; and that their position is awesome, though they can no longer singlehanded send armies into the field.

Students should be taught to understand how Christensen's free modifiers function and how they may function on various levels of a sentence,

depending on their structural functions. After locating the main clause (or clauses) of a sentence, students must understand the functional features of free modifiers. This understanding allows students to indicate the necessary levels -- levels that are either functionally subordinate or coordinate to the main clause.

The following examples taken from Christensen's work (1967) demonstrate the levels of complex sentences that are embedded with free modifiers.

```
1 We all live in two realities:
  2 one of seeming fixity,
    3 with instructions, dogmas, rules of punctuation, and routines,
      4 the calendared and clockwise world of all but futile round
        on round;
  2 and one of the whirling and flying electrons, dreams, and
    possibilities,
    3 behind the clock.
                          -- Sidney Cox
1 They regarded me silently,
  2 Brother Jack with a smile that went no deeper than his lips,
    3 his head cocked to one side,
    3 studying me with his penetrating eyes;
  2 the other blank-faced,
    3 looking out of eyes that were meant to reveal nothing and to
      stir profound uncertainty.
                          -- Ralph Ellison
```

A student's ability in understanding the above example sentences and also in being able to write similar sentences can now be transferred to understanding the functions of the free modifier of the Time sentence. Here are the various levels that students should be able to recognize:

```
1 Charles is an outdoorsman, and
1 the farm stay was thoroughly in character,
  2 but it is also true that this week evoked the kind of symbolism
    that maintains the royal illusion:
    3 that his family speaks for Britain,
      4 though not about government or anything else controversial;
    3 that they are mysterious and unapproachable'
      4 though much like me and thee;
    3 and that their position is awesome,
      4 though they can no longer singlehanded send armies into the
        field.
```

It should be noted that the lines marked level 2 can be better understood through review of what students have learned about sentence combining, in this case, practice in creating sentences with various types of noun substitutes.[3]

In summary, the instructional strategies utilized in guiding students in analyzing the many complex syntactical structures that they encounter in their reading clearly demonstrate just one important way in which reading and writing instruction can be integrated. The fact that the fields of reading and writing instruction are acquiring even greater knowledge from research and models of discourse processing -- models which focus on the processes of comprehension and production -- supports the belief that language education has tremendous promise for making significant strides in instructional approaches in the very near future.

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[3]Daiker, et al. (1979) list several structures that come under this heading of noun substitutes. Noun clauses are just one type.

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Appendix

The following is the complete passage from the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, Form A, 1960:

On one hand, the masses of the people in this country are preparing to take a much more active part than formerly in controlling its destinies; on the other hand, the aristocracy, using this word in the widest sense, to include not only the nobility, but also those reinforcements from the classes bordering upon itself, which this class constantly attracts and assimilates, while it is threatened with losing its hold on the rudder of government, its power to give to public affairs its own bias and direction, is losing also that influence on the spirit and character of the people which it long exercised. This will be warmly denied by some persons. Those who have grown up amidst a certain state of things, those whose habits, and interests, and affections, are closely concerned with its continuance, are slow to believe that it is not a part of the order of nature, or that it can ever come to an end. But what is here laid down, will not appear doubtful either to the most competent and friendly foreign observers of this country, or to those Englishmen who have applied themselves to see the tendencies of their nation as they are.